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PUBLIC REPORT

Foreign Nationalities Branch — Office of Strategic Services
Number M-131 — 18 January 1944
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Event: ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATIONS OF THE ASSASSINATION OF CARLO TRESCA

Sponsors: "Old Group" (publishers of L'Avvenire)
"Carlo Tresca Group" (publishers of Il Martello)

Speakers: Ciccio Cancellieri, Harry Kelly, John F. Finerty, Norman Thomas, H. R. Cantine, Felice Guadagni

Place: New York City
Date: 11 January 1944
Attendance: 150 at Fifth Avenue and East 15th Street
60 at the Rand School

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The followers of the Italian anarchist Carlo Tresca, who was assassinated 11 January 1943, are now split into two rival groups. Both commemorated his death by meeting and scattering red carnations at the place where Tresca was killed -- the corner of Fifth Avenue and East 15th Street, New York City.

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The "Carlo Tresca Group" is a body of the late anarchist's followers which continues publication of his semi-monthly paper, Il Martello. A number of former members of the group, toward whom Tresca's widow is sympathetic, have recently broken away and formed their own so-called "Old Group." On 25 December they began publication of a competitive semi-monthly paper, L'Avvenire.

The "Old Group" met at 12 noon on the scene of the crime. One of those present has estimated that about 150 persons attended, though an account in the weekly

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Parola (15 January) put the figure at 1,000. The speakers were Ciccio Cancellieri, one of the editors of L'Avvenire, Harry Kelly, John F. Finerty of the Civil Liberties Union, and Norman Thomas.

Cancellieri protested against the failure of authorities to discover the murderers of Tresca.

Finerty spoke of the New York Police as honest but inefficient. He stated that the Department of Justice and the FBI had refused to touch the case because it had no international ramifications. In Finerty's view such ramifications, whether they were Fascist or Communist, did exist. The speaker then attacked Russia's attitude toward Poland.

Norman Thomas praised Tresca for his effective work in exposing Fascists in New York where, he said, they were still powerful today. He said that it was in tapping wires for the Tresca case that District Attorney Hogan uncovered the scandal connected with Thomas Aurelio's candidacy for the bench. It seemed apparent to Thomas that the FBI had found the Tresca case too hot to touch. He expressed a wish that Mayor La Guardia, District Attorney Hogan, Governor Dewey, Attorney General Biddle, and J. Edgar Hoover might be among his audience. An unsolved murder of this sort, he argued, was an incitement to further political crimes.

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The "Old Group" meeting lasted only three-quarters of an hour; it broke up with the scattering of red carnations on the spot where Tresca was killed.

The "Carlo Tresca Group" met in the evening at 8 p. m. in the Rand School, New York City. About sixty people attended, including Vanni Montana, publicity director of the Italian-American Labor Council, and Umberto Gualtieri, member of the new Council of the Mazzini Society and editor of Nazioni Unite. The speakers were H. R. Cantine, editor of an American anarchist paper, Retort, and Felice Guadagni of the staff of the Martello.

Cantine read a eulogy of Tresca.

Guadagni gave a history of Tresca's career. The present meeting, he said, was a rite, not a commemoration; the latter could not be held until after the discovery of the murderer of Tresca. Guadagni extolled Tresca's work for the emancipation of the working class. Speaking of other anti-Fascists, he said that neither liberals nor Catholic liberals, such as Don Luigi Sturzo, held strong enough ideas.

After the meeting a procession went to the northwest corner of Fifth Avenue and East 15th Street and scattered red carnations.

At neither meeting was reference made to the rival group or its celebration.

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